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ALL INDIA MAGAZINE



SRI AUROBINDO SOCIETY
PONDICHERRY

—Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face.

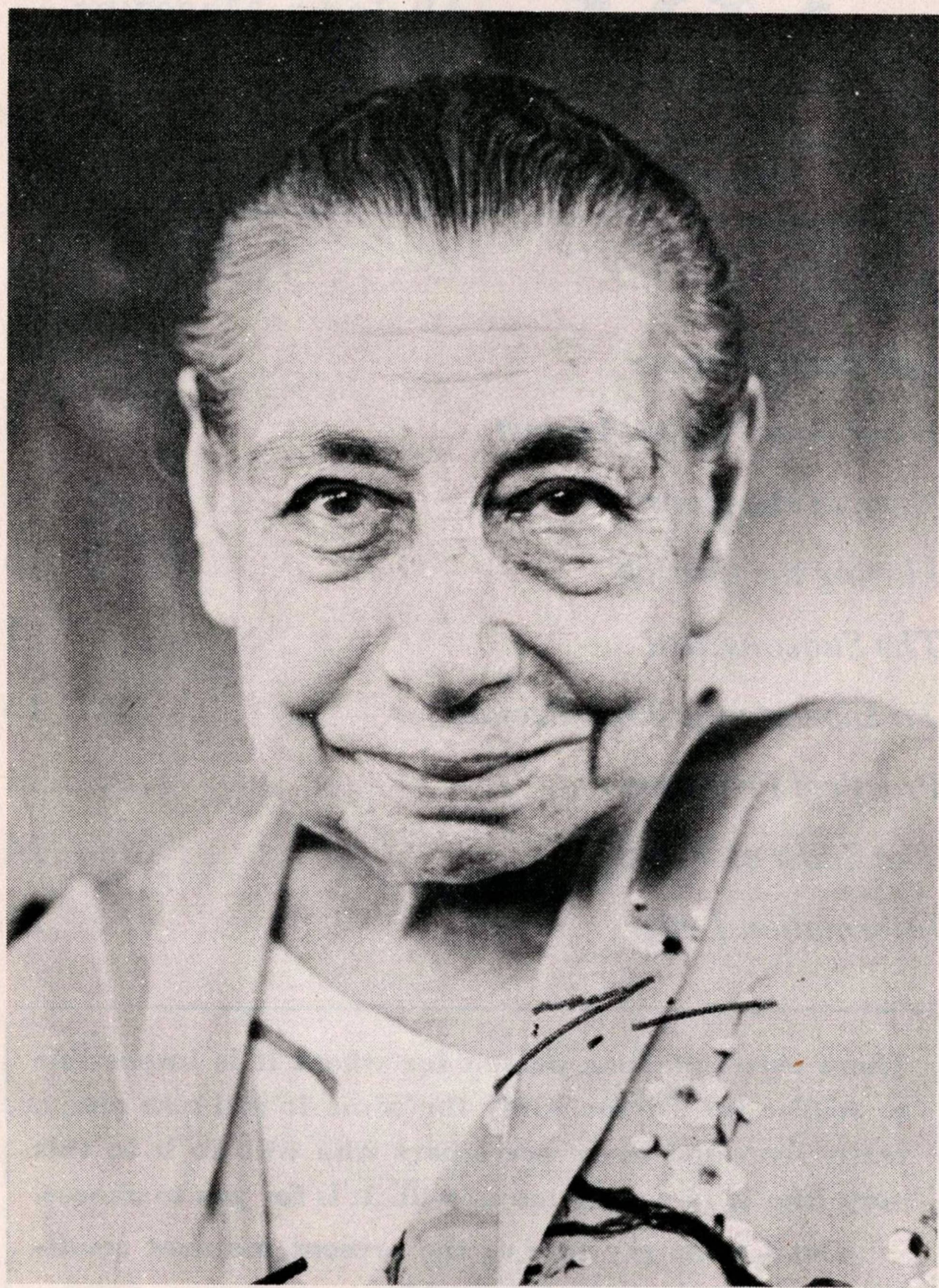
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There exists no such person for whom it is impossible to realise the Divine. Only for some it will take many, many lives and there are others who will do it in this very life. It is a question of will. It is for you to choose.

But I must say that at the present moment conditions are particularly favourable.

22. 7. 1969

The Mother

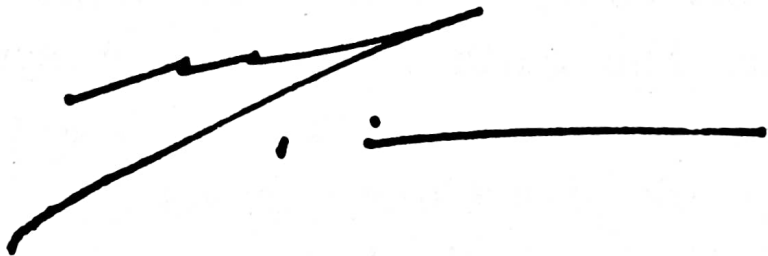


FOR NEW YEAR

My dear child, here is the programme for this year:

Unify your whole being around your highest consciousness and do not let your mind work at random. Doubt is not a sport to indulge in with impunity: it is a poison which drop by drop corrodes the soul.

With my love and blessings.



(Sri Aurobindo Circle, 1974, p. 9)

The Intention of Nature

It is what Sri Aurobindo has said from the beginning, that, hidden in the depths, at the core of matter, there is the Divine Presence and that the whole terrestrial evolution is made to prepare the return of the creation to its origin, to this Divine Presence which is at the centre of everything — that is the intention of Nature.

The universe is an objectivisation of the Supreme, as if He had objectivised himself outside of himself in order to see himself, to live himself, to know himself and so that there might be an existence and a consciousness capable of recognising him as their origin and uniting consciously with him to manifest him in the becoming. There is no other reason for the universe. The earth is a kind of symbolic crystallisation of universal life, a reduction, a concentration, so that the work of evolution may be easier to do and follow. And if we see the history of the earth, we can understand why the universe has been created. It is the Supreme growing aware of himself in an eternal Becoming; and the goal is the union of the created with the Creator, a union conscious, willing and free, in the Manifestation.

That is the secret of Nature. Nature is the executive Force, it is she who does the work.

And she takes up this creation, which appears to be totally inconscient but which contains the Supreme Consciousness and sole Reality and she works so that all this can develop, become self-aware and realise itself fully. But she does not show it from the very beginning. It develops gradually, and that is why at the start it is a secret which will be unveiled as it nears the end. And man has reached a point in the evolution high enough for this secret to be unveiled and for what was done in an apparent inconscience to be done consciously, willingly, and therefore much more rapidly and in the joy of realisation.

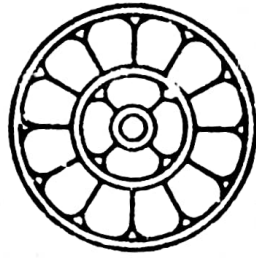
In man one can already see that the spiritual reality is being developed and it is going to express itself totally and freely. Formerly, in the animal and the plant, it was... it was necessary to be very clear-sighted to see it, but man is himself conscious of this spiritual reality, at least in the higher part of his human existence. Man is beginning to know what the Supreme Origin wants of him and is collaborating in carrying it out.

Nature wants the creation to become conscious of being the Creator himself in an objectivisation, that is to say, there is no difference between the Creator and the Creation, and the goal is a conscious and realised union. That is the secret of Nature.

7. 5. 1958

THE MOTHER

(Questions and Answers — 1957 and 1958)



*We do not fight against any creed,
any religion.*

*We do not fight against any form
of government.*

We do not fight against any social class.

*We do not fight against any nation
or civilisation.*

*We are fighting division, unconsciousness,
ignorance, inertia and falsehood.*

*We are endeavouring to establish upon
earth union, knowledge, consciousness, Truth,
and we fight whatever opposes the advent
of this new creation of Light, Peace, Truth and Love*

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**We are fighting division, unconsciousness, ignorance, inertia
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ledge, consciousness, truth; and we fight whatever opposes the
advent of this new creation of Light, Peace, Truth and Love.**

16. 2. 1965

The Mother

Thou Expectest Action

“Turn and face the danger”, Thou hast said to me. “Why dost thou wish to turn thy look away or fly far from action, away from the fight, into a profound contemplation of Truth? It is its integral manifestation that has to be realised, it is its victory over all the obstacles of blind ignorance and obscure hostility. Look straight at the danger and it will vanish before the Power.”

O Lord, I have understood the weakness of this most external nature which is always ready to surrender to Matter and to escape, as a compensation, into a supreme intellectual and spiritual independence. But Thou expectest from us action, and action does not allow of such an attitude. It is not enough to triumph in the inner worlds, we must triumph even in the most material worlds. We must not run away from the difficulty or the obstacle because we have the power to do so by taking shelter in the consciousness where there are no longer any obstacles.... We must look the danger straight in the face, with a faith in Thy Omnipotence, and Thy Omnipotence will triumph.

Give me integrally the heart of a fighter, O Lord, and Thy victory is sure.

“To conquer at any cost” must be the present motto. Not because we are attached to the work and its results, not because we are in need of such an action, not because we are incapable of escaping from all contingencies.

But because such is Thy command to us. But because the time has come for Thy triumph upon earth. But because Thou wilt an integral victory.

And in an infinite love for the world... let us fight !

September 5, 1914

THE MOTHER
(Prières et Méditations)



A sketch by the Mother

Playing the Ostrich

Q: I think I am sometimes on the point of having this experience [contact with the psychic being] but I always fall back into the ordinary consciousness. Why ?

Probably you have still maintained a division in you. One part of your being refuses to advance with the rest, a part that clings to itself, does not want to move, insists on being what it is. It is this that pulls you back.

One part of yourself delays, stops; and, instead of compelling it to follow, you leave it on the way. You close your eyes, you blind yourself, you do not want to see that you have this defect, this difficulty, this ignorance or this stupidity. You do not want to see, because it is not very pretty to see, you prefer to ignore it. But simply because you ignore it, it does not cease to exist.

It serves no purpose to play the ostrich¹; one day or another you must face it, you have to.

Otherwise, you see the goal there approaching, something in you moves forward, you are about to touch it, but never will you touch it if you have these fetters dragging you back.

¹ Ostrich is a large swift-running African and Arabian bird who buries its head in sand when pursued, in the belief that it cannot be seen (self-delusion). — ed.

A day comes when you have to clear up the place; otherwise you move in a circle, you proceed by small steps till the end of your life and when the moment of departing arrives you are obliged to say, "it will be another time". More so, if you had known nothing, understood nothing, had tried nothing — people are born, they live, they die and are born again and live again and die again and that continues indefinitely, they do not even raise the problem! But once you have had the taste, a foretaste of what life truly is, once you have discovered the very reason of your existence and tried for its realisation, such a thing should not be pleasant, it must be frightful.

Better do your work when you can do it consciously. That is exactly the meaning of the proverb, "Do not put off till tomorrow what you can do to-day". Today, that means here in this life. For the occasion is there, the opportunity is there and perhaps you will have to wait thousands of years to find it again. Better do the work, cost what it may and lose as little time as possible.

Each time you are afraid of looking straight at yourself and hide carefully from yourself what prevents you from advancing, you erect as it were a wall on the way; afterwards you have to demolish it, in order to pass on.

Better take up your task forthwith, look straight, straight in the face. Do not try to put a sugar coating over the bitter pill. Yes, it is bitter, all the weaknesses, uglinesses, all the vile little things you have in you. They are there and they are many. If you do not force yourself to open your eyes at each step, at every minute, you will always give yourself an excuse, what one calls "the mental understanding of oneself", and always and always.

Now then, as I told you, you are about to attain a realisation, about to touch a Light and to have an illumination, suddenly you find something pulling you back. Some people weep at that time, others lament and say, "Oh, poor me! Once again the same thing has happened!"

These are ridiculous weaknesses. You have only to look straight at yourself and say, "What is this little meanness, stupidity, vanity, ignorance, bad will that is there hiding in a corner, preventing me from crossing over the threshold to the new discovery? What is there in me so small, so mean, so obdurate, that hides like a worm in the fruit so that I may not see it?"

If you are sincere, you do find it and pull it out.

8. 6. 1955

THE MOTHER

(Bulletin, Nov. 1956, pp. 79-83)

The Subconscious

The subconscious is a concealed and unexpressed inarticulate consciousness which works below all our conscious physical activities. Just as what we call the superconscious is really a higher consciousness above from which things descend into the being, so the subconscious is below the body-consciousness and things come up into the physical, the vital and the mind-nature from there.

Just as the higher consciousness is superconscious to us and supports all our spiritual possibilities and nature, so the subconscious is the basis of our material being and supports all that comes up in the physical nature.

Men are not ordinarily conscious of either of these planes of their own being, but by sadhana they can become aware.

The subconscious retains the impressions of all our past experiences of life and they can come up from there in dream forms: most dreams in ordinary sleep are formations made from subconscious impressions.

The habit of strong recurrence of the same things in our physical consciousness, so that it is difficult to get rid of its habits, is largely due to a subconscious

support. The subconscious is full of irrational habits.

When things are rejected from all other parts of the nature, they go either into the environmental consciousness around us through which we communicate with others and with universal Nature and try to return from there or they sink into the subconscious and can come up from there even after lying long quiescent so that we think they are gone.

When the physical consciousness is being changed, the chief resistance comes from the subconscious. It is constantly maintaining or bringing back the inertia, weakness, obscurity, lack of intelligence which afflict the physical mind and vital or the obscure fears, desires, angers, lusts of the physical vital, or the illnesses, dullnesses, pains, incapacibilities to which the body-nature is prone.

If light, strength, the Mother's Consciousness is brought down into the body, it can penetrate the subconscious also and convert its obscurity and resistance.

When something is erased from the subconscious so completely that it leaves no seed and thrown out of the circumconscient so completely that it can return no more, then only can we be sure that we have finished with it for ever.

*

In our yoga we mean by the subconscious that quite submerged part of our being in which there is no wakingly conscious and coherent thought, will or feeling or organised reaction, but which yet receives obscurely the impressions of all things and stores them up in itself and from it too all sorts of stimuli, of per-

sistent habitual movements, crudely repeated or disguised in strange forms can surge up into dream or into the waking nature. For if these impressions rise up most in dream in an incoherent and disorganised manner, they can also and do rise up into our waking consciousness as a mechanical repetition of old thoughts, old mental, vital and physical habits or an obscure stimulus to sensations, actions, emotions which do not originate in or from our conscious thought or will and are even often opposed to its perceptions, choice or dictates. In the subconscious there is an obscure mind full of obstinate Sanskaras, impressions, associations, fixed notions, habitual reactions formed by our past, an obscure vital full of the seeds of habitual desires, sensations and nervous reactions, a most obscure material which governs much that has to do with the condition of the body. It is largely responsible for our illnesses; chronic or repeated illnesses are indeed mainly due to the subconscious and its obstinate memory and habit of repetition of whatever has impressed itself upon the body-consciousness. But this subconscious must be clearly distinguished from the subliminal parts of our being such as the inner or subtle physical consciousness, the inner vital or inner mental; for these are not at all obscure or incoherent or ill-organised, but only veiled from our surface consciousness. Our surface constantly receives something, inner touches, communications or influences, from these sources but does not know for the most part whence they come.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Letters on Yoga*, Cent. ed. vol. 22, pp. 356, 353)

○ The first step on this long path is to consecrate all our works as a sacrifice to the Divine in us and in the world; this is an attitude of the mind and heart, not too difficult to initiate, but very difficult to make absolutely sincere and all-pervasive. The second step is to renounce attachment to the fruit of our works; for the only true, inevitable and utterly desirable fruit of sacrifice — the one thing needful — is the Divine Presence and the Divine Consciousness and Power in us, and if that is gained, all else will be added. This is a transformation of the egoistic will in our vital being, our desire-soul and desire-nature, and it is far more difficult than the other. The third step is to get rid of the central egoism and even the ego-sense of the worker. That is the most difficult transformation of all and cannot be perfectly done if the first two steps have not been taken; but these first steps too cannot be completed unless the third comes in to crown the movement and, by the extinction of egoism, eradicates the very origin of desire. Only when the small ego-sense is rooted out from the nature can the seeker know his true person that stands above as a portion and power of the Divine and renounce all motive-force other than the will of the Divine Shakti.

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There are gradations in this last integralising movement; for it cannot be done at once or without long approaches that bring it progressively nearer and make it at last possible. The first attitude to be taken is to cease to regard ourselves as the worker and firmly to

realise that we are only one instrument of the cosmic Force. At first it is not the one Force but many cosmic forces that seem to move us; but these may be turned into feeders of the ego and this vision liberates the mind but not the rest of the nature. Even when we become aware of all as the working of one cosmic Force and of the Divine behind it, that too need not liberate. If the egoism of the worker disappears, the egoism of the instrument may replace it or else prolong it in a disguise. The life of the world has been full of instances of egoism of this kind and it can be more engrossing and enormous than any other; there is the same danger in Yoga. An intellectual perception or vital sense of a Force greater than ours and of ourselves as moved by it is not sufficient to liberate from the ego.

This perception, this sense of a greater Power in us or above and moving us, is not a hallucination or a megalomania. Those who thus feel and see have a larger sight than ordinary men and have advanced a step beyond the limited physical intelligence, but theirs is not the plenary vision or the direct experience. For, because they are not clear in mind and aware in the soul, because their awakening is more in the vital parts than into the spiritual substance of Self, they cannot be the conscious instruments of the Divine or come face to face with the Master, but are used through their fallible and imperfect nature. A much worse thing may befall those who break something of the human bonds but have not purity and have not the know-

ledge, for they may become instruments, but not of the Divine; too often, using his name, they serve unconsciously his masks and black Contraries, the Powers of Darkness.

Our nature must house the cosmic Force but not in its lower aspect or in its rajasic or sattwic movement; it must serve the universal Will, but in the light of a greater liberating knowledge. There must be no egoism of any kind in the attitude of the instrument, even when we are fully conscious of the greatness of the Force within us. Every man is knowingly or unknowingly the instrument of a universal Power and, apart from the inner Presence, there is no such essential difference between one action and another, one kind of instrumentation and another as would warrant the folly of an egoistic pride. The difference between knowledge and ignorance is a grace of the Spirit; the breath of divine Power blows where it lists and fills today one and tomorrow another with the word or the puissance. If the potter shapes one pot more perfectly than another, the merit lies not in the vessel but the maker. The attitude of our mind must not be "This

The difference between knowledge and ignorance is a grace of the Spirit; the breath of divine Power blows where it lists and fills today one and tomorrow another with the word or the puissance. If the potter shapes one pot more perfectly than another, the merit lies not in the vessel but the maker.

is my strength” or “Behold God’s power in me”, but rather “A Divine Power works in this mind and body and it is the same that works in all men and in the animal, in the plant and in the metal, in conscious and living things and in things appearing to be inconscient and inanimate.” This large view of the One working in all and of the whole world as the equal instrument of a divine action and gradual self-expression, if it becomes our entire experience, will help to eliminate all rajasic egoism out of us and even the sattwic ego-sense will begin to pass away from our nature.

The elimination of this form of ego leads straight towards the true instrumental action which is the essence of a perfect Karmayoga. For while we cherish the instrumental ego, we may pretend to ourselves that we are conscious instruments of the Divine, but in reality we are trying to make of the Divine Shakti an instrument of our own desires or our egoistic purpose. And even if the ego is subjected but not eliminated, we may indeed be engines of the divine Work, but we shall be imperfect tools and deflect or impair the working by our mental errors, our vital distortions or the obstinate incapacities of our physical nature. If this ego disappears, then we can truly become, not only pure instruments consciously consenting to every turn of the divine Hand that moves us, but aware of our true nature, conscious portions of the one Eternal and Infinite put out in herself for her works by the supreme Shakti.

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There is another greater step to be taken after the surrender of our instrumental ego to the Divine Shakti. It is not enough to know her as the one Cosmic Force that moves us and all creatures on the planes of mind, life and Matter; for this is the lower Nature and, although the Divine Knowledge, Light, Power are there concealed and at work in the Ignorance and can break partly its veil and manifest something of their true character or descend from above and uplift these inferior workings, yet, even if we realise the One in a spiritualised mind, a spiritualised life-movement, a spiritualised body-consciousness, an imperfection remains in the dynamic parts. There is a stumbling response to the Supreme Power, a veil over the face of the Divine, a constant mixture of the Ignorance. It is only when we open to the Divine Shakti in the truth of her force which transcends this lower Prakriti that we can be perfect instruments of her power and knowledge.

Not only liberation but perfection must be the aim of the Karmayoga. ... After the removal of the veil of ego [is] the removal of the veil of Nature and her inferior modes that govern our mind, life and body.

SRI AUROBINDO

(The Synthesis of Yoga, Cent. ed. vol. 20, pp. 235-40)

(To be continued)

Practical Problems

Q: Mother, should one give money to beggars or not?

In a well organised society, there should be no beggars. But so long as there are, do as you feel like. There are good reasons for doing it as well as for not doing it.

*

Q: Mother, when one is in the midst of Nature, of what should one think? Does it help us in any way to be in contact with Nature?

It is not through thought that one can be in contact with Nature, for Nature does not think.

But if you deeply feel the beauty of Nature and commune with her, that can help in widening the consciousness.

*

Q: Mother, how should the news of death be received? Especially when it is a near relative?

To say to the Supreme Lord: "Let Thy Will be done", and remain as quiet as possible.

If the person who is gone is a person whom one loves, one must concentrate one's love upon that person in peace and calm, for it is that which can most help him or her who has left.

Q: Mother, what does "realising the Divine" truly mean?

It means becoming conscious of the Divine Presence in oneself or on the spiritual heights, and once you are conscious of His Presence, you are to make to Him your total surrender so that you do not have any other will than His and in the end you unite your consciousness with His. That is "realising the Divine".

*

Q: Mother, how to unify one's being?

The first step is to find deep within you, behind all desires and impulses, a luminous consciousness which is present there always and it is that which manifests the physical being.

Usually you become aware of the presence of this consciousness, only when you have to face a danger or an unexpected event or a great sorrow.

You have therefore to come in conscious contact with that and learn to do it at will. The rest will follow.

Generally it is in the heart, behind the solar plexus, that you find the luminous presence.

*

Q: Mother, how is it better to go to bed early and to get up early?

When the sun sets, a kind of peace descends upon the earth and this peace is helpful for sleep.

When the sun rises, a vigorous energy descends upon the earth and this energy is helpful for work.

When you go to bed late and get up late, you contradict the forces of Nature and that is not very wise.

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If sleep is to bring you truly effective rest and repose, it would be good to take something before going to bed, a cup of milk or soup or fruit-juice, for instance. Light food gives a quiet sleep. In any case, one must abstain from too much food; for that makes sleep troubled and agitated with nightmares or otherwise makes it dense, heavy and dull. But the most important thing is to keep the mind clear, to quiet the feelings, calm the effervescence of desires and the preoccupations accompanying them. If before retiring to bed one had talked much, held animated discussions or read something intensely interesting and exciting, then one had better take some time to rest before sleeping so that the mind's activities may be quieted and the brain not yield to disorderly movements while the physical limbs alone sleep. On the other hand, if you are given to meditation, you would do well to concentrate for a few minutes upon a high and restful idea, in an aspiration towards a greater and vaster consciousness. Your sleep will profit greatly by it and you will escape in a large measure the risk of falling into unconsciousness while asleep.

THE MOTHER

(*Bulletins*, 1970, 1971 and *On Education*, pp. 91-92)

The Spirit of Tapasya

TAPASYA (Asceticism) is usually understood to mean the capacity to undergo physical discomfort and suffering. We are familiar with various types of Tapasya: sitting in summer with blazing fire all around and the fiery noonday sun overhead (Panchagnivrata), exposing one's bare limbs to the cold biting blasts among the eternal snows, lying down on a bed of sharp nails, betaking oneself to sack-cloth and ashes, fasting even to the point of death: there is no end to the variety of ways and means which man's ingenuity has invented to torture himself. Somehow the feeling has grown among spiritual, religious and even moral aspirants as well that the body is the devil that has to be curbed and controlled with bit and bridle and whip. Indeed the popular view measures the greatness of a saint by the amount of his physical privations.

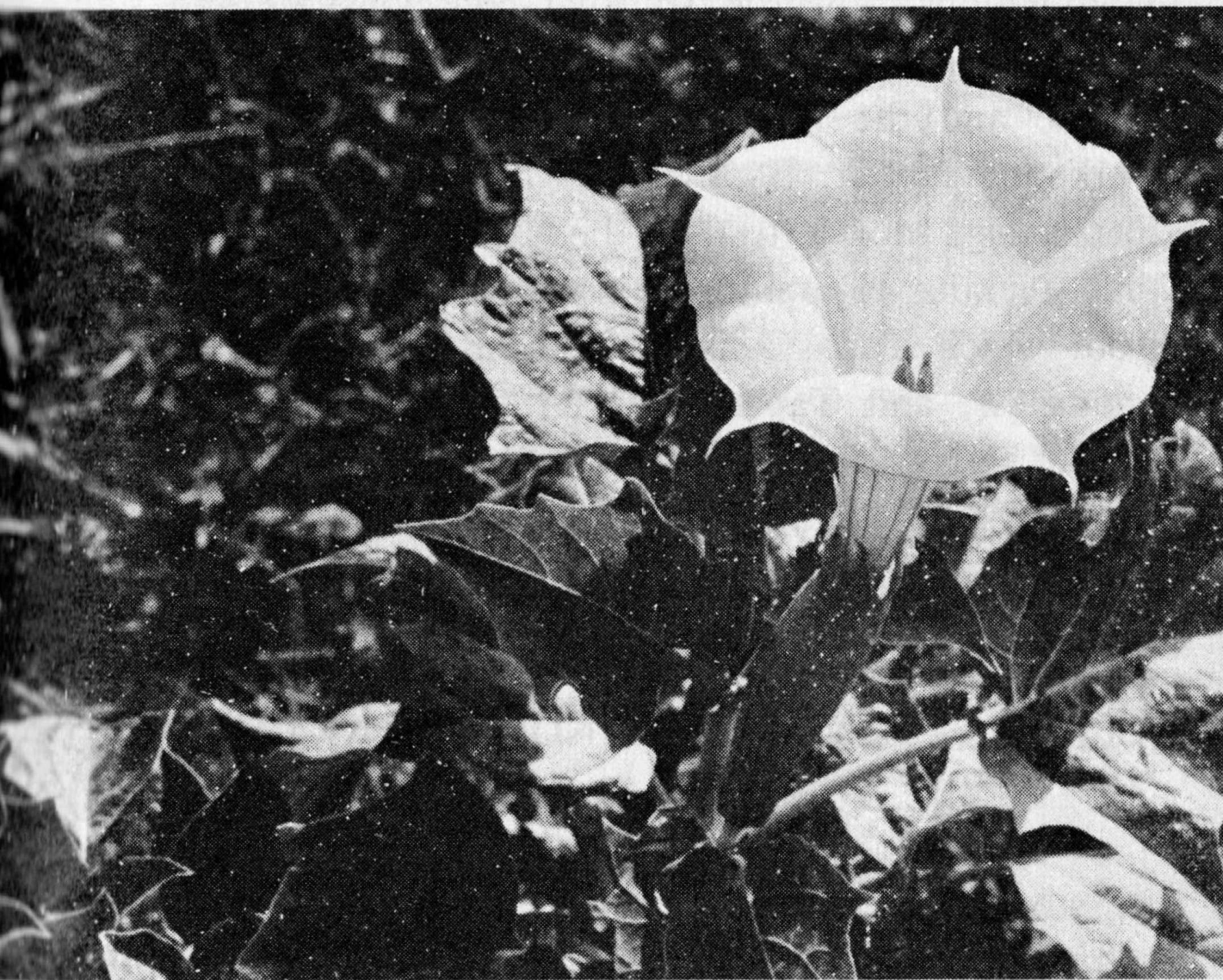
One seems not to know that the devil cannot be so easily checkmated or beguiled. For, indeed, it is easy for the body to take punishment, to submit to all kinds of rigours, yet feel as if it was making ample amends and atonement in that way rather than really give up its aboriginal instincts and impulses. Often one deceives oneself, succeeds in hiding, in secretly preserving one's unsaintliness behind a smoke-screen of the utmost physical Tapasya.

Real Tapasya, however, is not in relation to the body and its comforts and discomforts; it is in relation to the inner being, the consciousness and its directives

and movements. Tapasya, austerity, consists in reacting to the downward pull of the ordinary consciousness, turning and attuning it to the rhythm of higher levels. To oppose the force of gravitation, to move ceaselessly towards purer and luminous heights of being and consciousness, that is Tapasya, Askesis, true asceticism. Virgil, the great poet of a diviner order in human life, expressed the idea most beautifully and aptly in those

TAPASYA

(Spiritual significance given by the Mother to Datura flowers)



well-known lines, one of the characteristic passages showing his genius at its best:

*...superasque evadere ad auras,
Hoc opus, hic labor est.*¹

...to move out into the higher spaces,
This is work, here is labour.

Heroism consists in this untiring march upward to more and more rarefied heights. That means the growth of consciousness, its uplifting and expansion, freeing it from the limitations of the ignorant egoistic movements, pressing it forward to the domains of higher illuminations, towards spiritual consciousness and soul-knowledge, towards communion with the Divine, the cosmic and the transcendent Reality. That is the real work and labour. Bodily suffering is nothing: it is neither a sign nor a test of the ardours of consciousness thus seeking to uplift itself. Indeed, Tapas, the word from which Tapasya is derived, means energy of consciousness, and Tapasya is the exercise, the utilisation of that energy for the ascent and expansion of the consciousness. It is this inner athleticism that is the thing needful, not its vain physical simulacrum — not the one which is commonly worshipped.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

(*Evolution and the Earthly Destiny*, pp. 191-92)

¹ Virgil: *Aeneid*, VI. 128